

Fact Sheet 5

(March 2021)

This fact sheet tells you about the Direct Payments Scheme. It explains what Direct Payments are, who is eligible for the scheme, how to use it and what support is available.

What are Direct Payments?

A Direct Payment is a payment that can be made to people who are eligible to receive community care services from Social Services, and who would prefer to arrange their own services.

Direct Payments make it possible for you to buy the services that you have been assessed as needing, in a way that gives you greater choice and control. Direct Payments also allows for another suitable person to act on your behalf if needed. A suitable person would be needed if the person with care and support needs lacked the mental capacity to manage a direct payment, even with support.

You can decide how your needs will be met, by whom and at a time that suits you. You will have a wider choice of services as well as real control over your life – you will be managing your own care package. Direct payments help give people the opportunity to live as independently as possible.

Where this fact sheet refers to the person needing care, it may refer also to another suitable person who may act on behalf of the individual requiring care.

Who can receive Direct Payments?

Direct Payments can be offered to people who are eligible to receive Social Care Services.

People who are eligible include those people who have been assessed by the local authority as having eligible care and support needs, or in case of carers having support needs.



What can I use the Direct Payment for?

Direct Payments can only be spent on services to meet the needs described in your assessment and detailed in your care and support plan, or in the case of carers, their support plan.

You can use your Direct Payments to buy community care services such as:

- To help with personal care such as washing, dressing and eating meals
- Practical help and support with activities
- Respite care

You cannot normally use Direct Payments for health or housing services.

What are the benefits?

- You can choose how your needs will be met
- You can choose who provides the services
- You can receive services at a time that suits you
- You will receive help and support to manage the scheme

What would my responsibilities be?

You will be responsible for managing the way that your Direct Payments are spent in accordance with a contract which you would agree with us.

If you employ a Personal Assistant directly, you will have the responsibilities of an employer. If you employ a personal assistant we will expect that this person has a valid disclosure and barring certificate before they commence employment.

You may employ anyone as long as they promote your well-being.

Will I need to keep records?

Yes, the money you receive as a Direct Payment is for services to meet your social care needs. It remains public money, you must spend it on services to meet your care needs. When your direct payments start you will be told what records to keep and what information you will be expected to provide.

If you are worried that you might not be able to manage Direct Payments on your own you can get help. An adviser from the Direct Payments support service can offer you advice and support with this and assist you with recruitment and managing staff. The support service is provided by Carmarthenshire County Council.

How much money will I get?

This depends on an assessment of how much and what type of assistance you need. Your Care and Support Plan will state the number of hours per week you need and how much this will cost.

Will I have to pay anything?

You may be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of your care. This will be the same whether the services are arranged for you by us or whether you choose Direct Payments.

You will be entitled to have a financial assessment (means test) and the results of this will determine how much you will be asked to contribute.

Will Direct Payments affect my benefits?

No, Direct Payments do not affect your benefits at all and they are not classed as income for tax purposes.

What do I have to do to get Direct Payments?

The first step is to contact us for an assessment of your care and support needs.

A **Social Work staff member** will talk to you about your situation and the help that you require. This is called an assessment. Once you have been assessed as having social care needs, a Care and Support Plan will be arranged and your social worker will discuss the option of Direct Payments.

We provide a support scheme to help people to manage their Direct Payments if required. If you decide you would like to receive Direct Payments and support with this, an Adviser will visit you to discuss the Scheme.

If you would like to find out more about Direct Payments:

Contact your Social Worker if you have one or if you would like to receive an assessment of your care needs you can contact the Information and Advice and Assistance Service via:

- phone: 0300 333 2222 or
- minicom on:01554 756741
- SMS: 0789 2345678
- making a referral through our website www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/Socialcare

**If you would like this fact sheet in large print,
Braille or on audio,
please ☎ 01267 228703**



For more information on social care services log onto:
www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/socialcare